



# PSN

## *Project Safe Neighborhoods*



### A MESSAGE FROM UNITED STATES ATTORNEY KEVIN J. O'CONNOR

I am pleased to report that Project Safe Neighborhoods continues to make Connecticut a safer place to live. Since our last bulletin, the program has grown to include the City of Waterbury. There, Assistant State's Attorney Pat Griffin is working closely with prosecutors from the United States Attorney's Office to combat gun violence. Since August, 41 firearms cases have been disposed of in State Court to long dispositions and numerous federal firearms prosecutions have been brought as well. Project Safe Neighborhoods is now up and running with great results in every major Connecticut City. We expect this success to continue and to spread Project Safe Neighborhoods to additional Connecticut communities.

As you are aware, Project Safe Neighborhoods is not only about increased prosecution of gun crimes. It includes an aggressive public education and outreach campaign. Most recently, we successfully sponsored the "Pennies for Peace" initiative and the Rap/Poetry Contest with Jagged Edge. Both initiatives, which are described in more detail in this bulletin, spread the anti-gun violence message to our children.

The success of Project Safe Neighborhoods in Connecticut arises from the strong commitment to the program by community leaders as well as state, local and federal law enforcement. On behalf of everyone in the United States Attorney's Office, I thank you for your support of Project Safe Neighborhoods and I look forward to continuing to work with you to eradicate gun violence in Connecticut.

*Winter 2003/2004*

### *Jagged Edge Comes to Town*

A rap/poetry contest sponsored by the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, in partnership with the R & B group, *Jagged Edge* and WZMX-HOT 93.7 was held with Middle and High School students from the cities of Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. Contest entrants were asked to write a poem expressing their views about gun violence and how it can be stopped. More than 300 contest entries were received. From those entries, 41 winners were selected from Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. On Friday November 21, 2003, the top five winners from each city were invited to the Hartford Civic Center to attend the Hot 93.7, "Hot Jam" featuring *Jagged Edge*. Prior to the performance, the winners met *Jagged Edge* and each received an autographed *Jagged Edge* CD and poster. U.S. Attorney O'Connor and the members of *Jagged Edge* congratulated the 15 winners before the show. The top poems can be found throughout this edition of *PSN*.

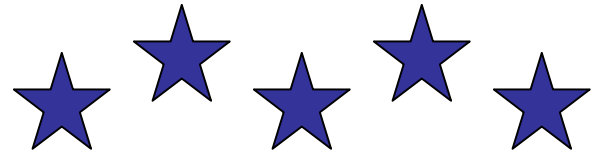
The poetry contest is the first of Project Safe Neighborhood's new outreach efforts designed to involve and invest families, youth, schools and communities in gun violence reduction activities.

"The aim of this contest was to prompt the most impressionable residents of Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport to consider the consequences of gun violence," U.S. Attorney O'Connor said. "We congratulate not only every winner, but also every student that took the time to write a poem. No one wants to live in fear of gun violence. Their participation in this contest reveals their commitment to help make our cities a safer place to live," U.S. Attorney O'Connor said.

***A Message from Connecticut's  
Project Safe Neighborhoods  
Coordinator***

I write to express my gratitude to all of those who have worked so diligently to make Project Safe Neighborhoods a success. Extraordinary partnerships have been formed between federal and state prosecutors, between and among federal, state and local law enforcement officers, probation officers, parole officers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others. These partnerships, forged through cooperative efforts, have produced tangible results measured in reduced violent crime rates and more livable cities. I can think of no more noble calling than working together, with you, to improve the quality of life for our fellow citizens. Thank you for your continued support of this special project.

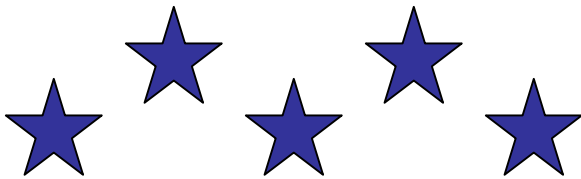
James I. Glasser  
Chief, Criminal Division  
Project Safe Neighborhood Coordinator



***Jagged Edge Poetry/Rap Contest  
Grand Prize Winner***

**Jocelyn Claxton, New Haven  
Age 16**

I look at my hood and see all the guns in the street.  
The chaos has people dyin' and  
others wanting to leave.  
It's not even safe to play ball at the courts.  
Make a false call and some dudes will go off.  
Violence with guns happens so very often.  
Many young lives taken and now rest in coffins.  
People want to be thug at any and all costs.  
One result of this is how *Lil' Dunner* was lost.  
There's always gonna be beef it's the American way.  
Like bad blood is constant between the *Ville* and  
*Tre*.  
We should find new means and solve our problems  
differently.  
Maybe we could solve them like humans by showing  
sympathy.  
First we have to erase the negative images on the  
news.  
To do this we need to stop the shootings at schools.  
If we would stop the gunfire the violence would  
cease.  
Streets would be safer no more disturbin' the peace.  
If we all come together we can bring violence to an  
end.  
and when we do we'll have a real message to send.



Jagged Edge with Bridgeport's Top Five Winners:  
James Piazza, Ana T. Rosa, Tianah Shacklewood,  
Shannon Gouse and Janissa Figueroa

## THE PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS MISSION

Violent crime is a plague on our urban centers. The myriad redounding effects of violent crime permeate and impact every facet of life in our inner-cities. High crime means businesses will not move into these areas, jobs are lost, tax revenues wither, schools suffer, infrastructure costs soar, taxes are raised to support the increased costs, and so it goes. To address violent crime, the mission of Project Safe Neighborhoods is simple, to involve and motivate the community, along with law enforcement authorities, to improve the quality of life in our communities.

Accomplishing this objective requires considerably more than the traditional law enforcement role of investigating crimes after-the-fact and then prosecuting the offender. A myopic view of addressing violent crime and gun crime has not, and will not solve the problem. Instead, a multi-faceted approach employed by the PSN is showing extraordinary results evidenced by declining violent crime rates in certain of our States largest cities. The Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative employs the following strategies, among others:

- Historical data establishes that a relatively small percent of the population is responsible for a disproportionate percent of violent crime. The PSN initiative focuses on habitual offenders who are involved in gun crimes in order to remove these individuals from the community so they are not able to re-offend. To accomplish this objective, a state prosecutor is paired with a federal prosecutor in the major cities of Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury and Stamford. The prosecutors are teamed with detectives who are dedicated to firearms enforcement and the PSN initiative. In each city, the assigned team reviews each and every firearm incident, reviews the criminal history of the defendant, the facts of the offense, and other relevant information in order to make a determination of whether the case is appropriate for federal prosecution. If it is, state authorities make a plea offer to the defendant and advise the defendant that if the offer is not accepted by a date certain, the case will be adopted for federal prosecution. If the plea offer is rejected, the case is presented to a grand jury for consideration of indictment. Our experience over the past eighteen months demonstrates that by leveraging the specter of federal prosecution, most defendants plead guilty to state charges earlier in the process to more significant terms of incarceration.

Those who do not accept the plea offer, are indicted promptly and prosecuted federally. At present, ninety-eight percent of the firearms cases that are prosecuted federally result in a conviction.

- In addition to the aggressive prosecution of firearms cases, “offender meetings” are conducted regularly in order to deter those who have been through the criminal justice system from offending again. To accomplish this objective, the following measures, among others, have been instituted. A short film has been created which is shown to every inmate before he or she is released from a state correctional institution. That film features United States Attorney Kevin O’Connor, Assistant State’s Attorney Jack Doyle, former Police Chief Mel Wearing and an ex-offender. Each advises the viewer of the PSN initiative and of the consequences of commission of a drug crime or firearm crime. In addition, one of the most important outreach initiatives is the monthly offender meetings. At these meetings, the partnerships, in coordination with the Connecticut Board of Parole, the Connecticut Probation Office and the Connecticut Department of Corrections, speak to 35-50 violent felons currently on some form of supervision. Each task force explains the team approach to gun crime, discusses recent cases that have gone through the state and federal system and attempts to persuade the attendees to think twice before possessing a firearm. The second part of these meetings consist of speakers from our community resource partners. These speakers discuss the availability of services to assist with anything from continuing education or obtaining a GED; fatherhood issues, such as custody, visitation and support; obtaining identification such as a valid Connecticut driver's license or certified birth certificates; to career resources, such as interview skills and resume writing. It is during this second half of the meetings that the attendees see that an effort is being made by law enforcement to assist them in making the right decisions. The U.S. Attorney’s Office has arranged for job fairs where employers willing to hire persons with a criminal record are brought to one location and following an offender meeting the employers are given an opportunity to meet with prospective employees. Other similar initiatives have been implemented to give persons at risk for committing additional crimes the tools to succeed.

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- PSN's strategy also includes community outreach and the involvement of members of organizations in communities affected by crime. Connecticut's community based organizations reach out to those recently released from prison and young adults who may be at risk for engaging in criminal activity by offering a variety of resources, including job training, adult education, substance abuse counseling, family counseling and spiritual guidance. The U.S. Attorney's Office has teamed with The Justice Education Center to get the PSN message out to the community. This effort has taken many forms, including making certain that news of dispositions in firearms cases makes it back to the community. Other initiatives have included poetry and rap contests about gun violence. The winners of a recent contest (some of the raps and poems are included in this volume) were treated to a concert by Jagged Edge. There are bus wraps and commercials that have been produced for television and radio that proclaim our message that "WE ARE CONNECTICUT UNITED AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE."
- Assistant United States Attorney Keith King has been designated our "Project Sentry" prosecutor. In addition to prosecuting cases involving the transfer of firearms to juveniles and possession of firearms by other prohibited persons, AUSA King is responsible for involving youth in the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative and communicating the PSN message to young people. AUSA King is uniquely suited to this assignment. In addition to being an experienced federal prosecutor, AUSA King is a former officer in the United States Marine Corps and an ordained minister. AUSA King has reached literally thousands of young people and has succeeded in becoming a part of school curriculums in major cities in this State. AUSA King has developed innovative programs such as basketball competitions and other similar events which incorporate the PSN lecture and audio video presentation as a component to dissuade our youth from becoming involved in criminal conduct.

There is much more to tell about our Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative. We believe in this project and are committed to working with our partners to make Connecticut cities safer and more livable.

James I. Glasser  
Chief, Criminal Division  
Project Safe Neighborhoods Coordinator

## **PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS SPONSORS EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE AND JOB FAIR FOR EX-OFFENDERS**

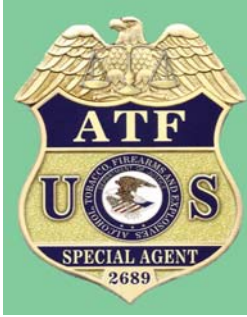
As part of the Project Safe Neighborhood initiative, United States Attorney Kevin J. O'Connor in partnership with Career Resources, Inc., the Salvation Army, The United Way of Connecticut 2-1-1 Infoline, and The Department of Labor sponsored an Employment Resource and Job Fair held on Wednesday, October 1, 2003 at the Salvation Army, 30 Elm Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

"PSN is not just about putting people in jail. We have enlisted the assistance of community groups and others in each city who can provide the support services released offenders may need to successfully re-enter the community." U.S. Attorney O'Connor explained that under the PSN initiative, probationers are required to attend an "offender meeting" at which the consequences of committing further crimes is explained. "We also arrange for a support network to come to these meetings including drug and alcohol counselors, career counselors and other job and education providers so that persons recently released from prison are given not only the opportunity, but also the tools to succeed in the community" O'Connor said.

"The best social service program is a job. By working together with area programs, employers, and community we can continue to move forward" said Carmen A. Nieves, Program Manager for The Community Network Center, operated by Career Resources, Inc.

"PSN is not only about 'Hard Time for Gun Crime', it is also about insuring that ex-offenders, after serving their sentences, have the opportunity to turn their lives around. This resource and job fair was able to provide that essential link" O'Connor said.





### ***Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives provides PSN Law Enforcement Training***

A two-day intensive course on firearm interdiction was held on September 8 and 9 at the New Haven Fire Department Training Academy. This course was a collaborative effort between the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Office of the United States Attorney. The training included segments on the use of the Integrated Ballistics Identification System and NIBIN, Firearms Identification, How crime guns hit our streets, as well as Federal Firearms laws, Domestic Violence laws, Recurring issues in gun prosecutions, and Firearms Trafficking to Canada. One of the highlights of the two days of training was the four-hour segment on the "Characteristics of an Armed Gunmen" presented by Retired Lieutenant Richard Hobson of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C. Ret. Lt. Hobson offered detailed instruction on identifying characteristics of persons who carry concealed firearms, legal issues regarding stop and frisk, and articulating probable cause for searches. Over 100 state and local law enforcement members attended this training. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, together with the U.S. Attorney's office, are in the process of attempting to schedule a condensed version of this training to take place in 2004.

This Project Safe Neighborhoods training envisions a series of one-day training sessions to take place in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. The training is expected to include Lt. Hobson's "Characteristics of an Armed Gunmen," "Recurring Issues in Gun Prosecutions," and "Firearms Identification." We expect that additional information on this training will be forwarded to police departments in the very near future.



*United States Attorney, Kevin J. O'Connor and Ilyssa Delgado*

### ***Ilyssa Delgado, New Haven Age 9***

G = Guns ain't right  
U = You know it's true  
N = Now you know what to do. If not, let me tell you  
V = Vow to say no with me  
I = I ain't gonna be a fool  
O = Only you can fix it  
L = Let somebody know  
E = Encourage people you know  
N = Know when to say No  
C = Be Creative  
E = Everybody knows to just say No.

The Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative has instituted a training regimen in certain of the PSN sites. The training is designed to improve the quality of firearms investigation so that when these cases get to either state or federal court, the chances of obtaining convictions is increased, and, owing to the strength of the cases, there is less of an incentive for the prosecution to negotiate a disposition based in risk of trial assessments.

For example, in Bridgeport, Assistant States Attorney Craig Nowak and Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Spector conduct training sessions at the Bridgeport Police Academy approximately every other month. They teach a day and a night session to reach patrol officers from all shifts. Supervisors learn about the training through the monthly PSN Task Force meetings and do their best to make sure as many patrol officers and sergeants attend as possible. The classes themselves are approximately ninety minutes long and are intended to review issues which arise in gun cases from the nascent stages of the investigation to an officer's testimony at trial. Specifically, the prosecutors cover the following subjects: (1) a review of the PSN initiative, including mention of various recent dispositions in state and federal gun cases and the officers who worked on those cases; (2) the members of the PSN Task Force and their phone numbers; (3) Terry stops and what constitutes reasonable suspicion; (4) anonymous tips; (5) report writing to make certain reports clearly articulate those factors that gave rise to reasonable suspicion or probable cause; (6) the difference between a consensual encounter, a Terry stop and an arrest; (7) Miranda warnings; (8) how "interrogation" and "custody" are defined for Miranda purposes; (9) questioning during a Terry stop; (10) investigative techniques in gun cases; (11) photographing weapons in place; (12) purpose of fingerprinting all seized firearms; (13) use of the federal grand jury to investigate cases; (14) provision of witness names and addresses in police reports; (15) testifying before the grand jury; (16) testifying before the trial jury; and (17) cross-examination. The training sessions are updated continuously to reflect current issues which arise in pending cases. In addition, the prosecutors use the sessions as opportunities to address questions from the officers about particular cases or about particular factual scenarios (and their legal ramifications).

Officers attending the training sessions have indicated, not only that they appreciate the refresher on Fourth and Fifth Amendment law and the like, but also that they are motivated to excel due to the personal attention being given to their cases and their day-to-day activities.

As a result of several of the training sessions, initiatives have been instituted. For instance, in a number of cases that went to trial, police officers were questioned exhaustively and aggressively about the precise location where firearms were recovered. To meet this diffuse line of cross examination and strengthen the proof supporting these cases, disposable cameras were issued to all patrol officers with instructions to photograph firearms in place where practicable before they are seized. In addition, to meet specific challenges to chain of custody issues related to the collection and storage of firearms, officers have been instructed to mark firearms when they are taken from the scene.

The Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative encourages this and similar training. If you would like to learn more about the training described in this article, or if you would like assistance in organizing a training session, please call Jim Glasser at 203-821-3742.

***John Crooms, Hartford***

***Age 16***

If you want to live life happy  
and have some fun  
You got to pick up the books  
and put down the gun  
Reach out to the person close to you  
and give em a hug  
Tell them you love them,  
they don't need the drugs  
We need to stop the violence  
and start the peace  
We need to give each other dap  
and drop the beef



**STATE v JESUS JORGE**  
**(Bridgeport)**

Jesus Jorge was arrested on March 7, 2003 when officers with the Connecticut Violent Crime FBI Fugitive Task Force went to his residence to execute an arrest warrant. The arrest warrant was based on an allegation that Jorge, age 21, had been having sexual intercourse with his 14 year old. When the officers arrived at the first floor apartment of 501 Grand Street, in Bridgeport, they found Jorge sleeping on a couch in the living room. They ordered him to get up and put his hands on top of his head. As he sat up, Detective Robert Martin observed the wooden grip of a handgun protruding from underneath a couch cushion. Jorge was then taken into custody. The firearm was identified as a silver, .38 caliber Charter Arms pistol loaded with six .38 caliber hollow-point bullets. ATF was called out to the scene. They advised Jorge of his Miranda rights and he gave them an oral statement admitting that the gun was his. Referring to his arrest in the apartment, Jorge indicated that "once I realized they were cops, I sort of relaxed, but if they would have gave me another thirty seconds I would have shot them both." The PSN task force reviewed Jorge's case and gave him the chance to plead guilty in state court to a term of incarceration comparable to his federal exposure. He accepted the state plea offer and received a sentence of 15 years' incarceration, execution suspended after 8 years, and 5 years probation.

***Tianah Shacklewood, Bridgeport***  
***Age 13***

Stop all clocks, cut off the telephones, prevent  
the dog from eating its bone.

Silence the pianos and with muffled drum,  
bring out the coffins let the mourners come.

Let airplanes circle roaming overhead  
scribbling in the sky the message he is dead.

He was my north, my south, my east and west,  
my working week and my Sunday rest.

My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song,

I thought that love would last forever, I was  
completely wrong.

The stars are no longer wanted now, put out  
everyone.

Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun, pour  
away the ocean and sweep up the wood.

For nothing now can ever come to any good.

***Janissa Figueroa, Bridgeport***  
***Age 11***

It's a shame when a gun is considered fun or  
cool, No that's bull!

Our future is dying, children crying, and  
parents sighing.

A bullet has no name, it's like a beast who you  
cannot tame,

It's a machine that kills and destroys.

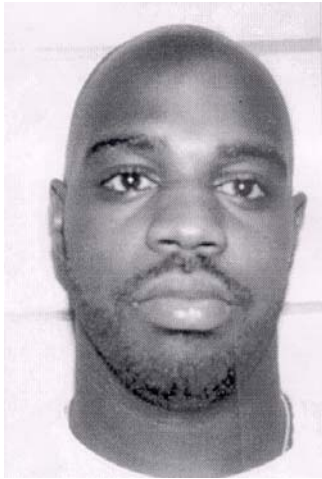
But, oh!Boy! The trigger man, is the sicker  
man who calls himself the hit – man.

He is someone's son, but was never taught to  
say no 2 guns.

He chose to lose instead of saying no.

It's unity, maturity, and integrity that will give  
you a destiny.

It will give us the right clue of what to do.  
So, say No 2 Guns or you'll end up being a  
bum.



**UNITED STATES v. DAMOND BESTER**  
**(Hartford)**

Damond Bester, age 27, of Hartford, Connecticut, was arrested when found in possession of a .45 caliber, semi-automatic pistol while in a nightclub in the north end of Hartford. Bester has an extensive criminal history, including two convictions for sale of narcotics in the Hartford area. Bester was apprehended by officers of Connecticut Parole and the Hartford Police Department as part of the State of Connecticut MARCH ("Multi-Agency Response to Chronic Hotspots") Program, whereby various law enforcement and regulatory personnel conduct investigations at business establishments to ensure compliance with various laws and regulations.

The United States Attorney's Office and the Chief State's Attorney's Office immediately conferred concerning the appropriate venue for prosecution of Bester. Bester also had a pending narcotics case in state court. Bester pleaded guilty to the state narcotics offense and was sentenced to two years incarceration. Bester ultimately pleaded guilty in federal court to the gun charge and was recently sentenced to 10 years. The federal sentence was ordered to run consecutive to the 2-year state sentence

*Nicolle Rolon, Hartford*

*Age 13*

People kill over dolla bills.  
They play with guns and think it is fun.  
But what they don't realize is what they have  
done.  
Like that boy who shot his friend in the back  
He didn't realize that he wouldn't come back.  
Then his mother decided to run  
But how did her son get that gun?  
He is too young to be throwing his life away.  
He should have been playing with his friends at  
the park that day.  
He should have went there from the start  
Instead of playin with a gun and almost killing  
someone.  
So many kids are getting guns then when  
someone dies it is all over the news  
And then people say that what that person or kid  
did was the wrong decision to choose.  
But really is it the kids fault if nobody teaches  
them what is wrong or right?  
Why are adults killing over drugs and money,  
Thinking that they are thugs and that it is funny  
to kill someone.  
Say no to guns because they kill,  
Just sit back, relax and chill  
Or if you do play with guns it could lead you to  
jail  
With no bail and not receive any mail  
And then you will look back through your bars  
And say I wish I would have never played with  
that gun  
And now I'm not having any fun.







**UNITED STATES v. EDWARD ROQUE**  
**(Bridgeport)**

On October 25, 2002, Edward Roque, while in the vicinity of East Main and Berkshire Streets, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, at approximately 6:15 p.m., became engaged in a scuffle with an unidentified man who subsequently fled toward a nearby garage. Eddy Ramirez, the lessee of the garage was inside at the time working on cars. His wife, Lydia Ramirez, and their young children, were also inside; Lydia was sitting in the driver's seat of their car, which was parked and idling, with their three children, ages 10, 6 and 2 in the back seat. ROQUE ran into the garage looking for the individual with whom he had been fighting. He had a gun in his hand and was waving it around. He confronted Eddy Ramirez, asked him where the individual had gone, and threatened him with the firearm. Lydia Ramirez saw what was happening and called the police using her cell phone. ROQUE saw what she was doing, ran over to the driver's side window of her car and yelled at her to hang up the phone or he would shoot her. Lydia was heard on the dispatch tape reporting a man with a gun and then abruptly disconnecting the line.



Bridgeport Police Sergeants Mark Straubel and Christine Burns were nearby, heard the dispatch report and responded to the area. When they arrived, Roque was standing outside on the street corner. The officers observed him holding what appeared to be a firearm. They directed him to drop the weapon; Roque refused, placed the weapon in his waistband and ran. A foot chase ensued, during which Roque threw the weapon and his jacket (which contained a box of ammunition). He was eventually apprehended.

The weapon was identified as a Colt .25 caliber handgun. Roque was indicted in December 2002 as an Armed Career Criminal. In August 2003, two days before jury selection, Roque pleaded guilty. At sentencing, he faced a guideline range of 180-210 months. The court sentenced him to 210 months (approximately 17 years) due, in large part, to his violent history and the fact that much of this violence had been directed at correctional and police officers.

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*Ashley Long, Hartford*

*Age 11*

Guns are bad, they can make people sad.  
You better stop that son, because you're not going  
to get nothing done.  
So what's the news? What are you going to  
choose?  
Guns or life, you know you're going to lose,  
So what are you going to do?  
Gun violence is just for fools,  
So get an education and go back to school.  
You don't know the consequences and the rules.  
So what do you think you should choose?  
So you better listen to my facts before you get paid  
back.

**UNITED STATES v. RAUL COLON**  
**(Hartford)**

Raul Colon was driving a vehicle in the south end of Hartford in the early morning hours of December 22, 2002, when an officer observed him run a red light. Sergeant Steve Miele of the Hartford Police Department made the traffic stop. While approaching the vehicle, Sergeant Miele observed Colon making furtive movements in the front of the car. While at the car's window, Miele observed the handle of a firearm protruding from under the passenger's seat. A search of the car yielded a Bryco Arms, Model Jennings, .9 millimeter, semi-automatic pistol.

Pursuant to the case protocol for Project Safe Neighborhoods in Hartford, Colon was immediately debriefed by a task force detective and admitted to obtaining the firearm "for protection on the mean streets." Colon has an extensive criminal history, including state convictions for robbery and assault, and a federal conviction for conspiracy to commit violent crime in aid of racketeering. Because of Colon's extensive criminal history, the case was immediately adopted for federal prosecution.

On September 17, 2003, Raul Colon was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment and five years supervised release pursuant to the federal Armed Career Criminal Act.



***Eduardo Mendoza, Hartford***

***Age 11***

Say no to a gun 'cause it ain't no fun.  
They can kill you in a minute, do you know what  
is in it  
Bullets, ...made out of metal, it's not really getto.  
Why you got a gun in your hand, if you know  
where you'll land  
You'll land in jail, you really did fail.  
So why do you try, if you know you might die.  
If your friends get a gun, don't copy them son.  
If to get a gun you choose, then you know you'll  
lose.  
Why do you bother, it'll take more than a father  
To stop the killing, and if you're really willing  
To say no to a gun, then you've already won!



***Shalice Culbreath, New Haven***

***Age 14***

What's the purpose, guns are made out just to hurt  
us.  
A little piece of metal can do a lot of harm.  
A person can lose a leg, may even lose an arm.  
People won't understand what the consequences will  
be.  
Till they can see how easily they tear apart a family.  
Just say no to guns, in the end it's not all fun.  
Think of how easily a life could be taken  
Just because you have been mistaken.  
So, before you pick up that hot piece of metal,  
Think about all the things I have had to tell you.  
Don't settle your problems with a gun,  
Do it peacefully and you will have won.



**UNITED STATES v. NORMAN**  
**YOUNGBLOOD**  
**(Bridgeport)**

On January 29, 2003, officers from the Bridgeport Police Department's Tactical Narcotics Team commenced surveillance of a suspected drug dealer named "Quincy Howard." Based on tips from confidential sources and other law enforcement agencies, officers believed Howard was a crack cocaine dealer operating in the Bunnell Street area of Bridgeport. In the morning hours, officers stopped Howard, who was seen leaving his residence at 150 Madison Avenue in a black Jeep Wrangler. They had information from a confidential source that Howard was leaving his house to engage in a drug transaction. When they stopped him, they found him in possession of twenty-eight small baggies of crack cocaine. They secured his consent to search the 150 Madison Avenue residence. In a dresser drawer of the master bedroom they found a 9 mm Sturm Ruger pistol, and, in the closet, they found approximately 31 grams of crack cocaine. The gun was not loaded and was missing its magazine.

ATF ran a trace on the Ruger. It was purchased from D'Andrea's Gun Case in Stratford, Connecticut on September 13, 2000 by an individual named "Norman Youngblood," who has a concealed weapon permit.

Several interviews, including one with Youngblood, confirmed that Youngblood sold the gun to a drug dealer in Bridgeport whom he knew as "Q." He sold the firearm to Q for \$200 worth of cocaine. He told the agents he had taken the ammunition and magazine out of the gun before selling it. According to Youngblood, he thought Q was going to sell it back to him the next day for \$200, but when Youngblood returned, Q raised the price to \$400. He admitted that he was a cocaine user. Youngblood described his decision to sell the firearm to Q as a "stupid thing to do." He will have plenty of time to think about his own stupidity. He pleaded guilty to a one-count information charging him with possession of a firearm by an unlawful user of narcotics. He will be sentenced in February 2004.

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***James Piazza, Bridgeport***  
***Age 13***

One gun

One bullet

One person

One death

Friends are mad

Family's are sad

One person

One mistake

One death

Many hearts break

**UNITED STATES v. GERALDO GARCIA**  
**(New Haven)**

On September 1, 2002, Geraldo Garcia, 31 years old, bought two guns that had been stolen by a drug addict from the residence of a former East Haven police officer. Immediately after being notified of the theft of firearms, East Haven police opened an investigation and determined that the guns had been sold on the street to Garcia, and received information that Garcia was storing the weapons in a car registered to Garcia's mother. On September 3, 2002, New Haven and East Haven police officers went to Garcia's home. Although Garcia was not present, when his mother learned the police were trying to recover stolen firearms, she gave the police permission to search her car. When they searched the car, the officers found numerous plastic bags of marijuana, packaged for sale, in the glove compartment. While they were searching the rest of the car, Garcia arrived on the scene. Garcia admitted that he had purchased the guns from the drug addict, and admitted that one of the guns, a .40 caliber Beretta handgun, was stored in the trunk of the car. He also admitted that he owned the marijuana. Garcia then offered to recover a second gun, which he appeared to have resold on the street. Within hours, Garcia turned over to police the second stolen gun, a .44 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver.

Notwithstanding the fact that he was caught red-handed with guns and drugs, Garcia refused to accept a very generous plea offer in state court. In light of his four previous felony convictions (including three convictions for sale of narcotics), a grand jury indicted Garcia in federal court on May 20, 2003. Garcia insisted on exercising his constitutional right to a trial, which took place in November, 2003. The case was tried to a jury, which promptly convicted Garcia. On January 23, 2004, he was sentenced to a 5-year term of imprisonment. Garcia still faces narcotics charges in state court.



**UNITED STATES v. DERRICK WRIGHT**  
**(New Haven)**

On July 18, 2003, detectives of the New Haven Police Department, acting on information obtained from a confidential informant, applied for and executed a search warrant at the residence of 22-year old Derrick Wright. In the basement of the residence, the detectives found an AK-47 type rifle, along with 33 rounds of ammunition for this firearm. In a recorded post-arrest statement, Wright admitted to detectives of the New Haven Police Department that he had purchased the firearm from a drug addict and stored it in his basement, along with the ammunition. Wright, who had a previous felony conviction for sale of narcotics, was indicted on May 20, 2003 for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. On October 2, 2003, Wright pleaded guilty. On December 19, 2003, he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 37 months.

This case is a good example of the effectiveness of the new firearms recovery protocol instituted by the New Haven Police Department in 2003, pursuant to which a specially designated detective is notified of every incident where a firearm is recovered and a suspect apprehended. Under this protocol, the detective conducts an interview of the suspect as soon as the suspect is brought to police headquarters. In many cases, the post-arrest interview has resulted in a confession by the suspect, allowing police and prosecutors to dispose of cases more efficiently.



**STATE v. KENTON TAYLOR**  
**(Bridgeport)**

On April 19, 2003, the Bridgeport Police Department's Tactical Narcotics Team executed a search warrant on Unit 510F, Trumbull Avenue, in Bridgeport. TNT had determined that crack cocaine was being processed, packaged and sold from this apartment. When police entered, they found Kenton Taylor and Jaselyn Seda. Officers immediately located a black Kel Tec 9 millimeter sub 9 rifle with a folding stock. The gun had been leaning up against the couch in the living room, near the rear door. They also found a ceramic plate with cocaine residue on it, a dollar bill containing white powder residue, a translucent fold containing off-white powder, a clear ziplock bag containing a white rock-like substance, and several clear plastic bags and straws with residue on them. They found a cell phone, suspected drug records, additional suspected packaging materials, a scale, and a box of 357 magnum ammunition. At booking, Taylor stated that the gun belonged to someone else, and that he was simply storing it for that person. Seda gave the same account (apparently the story was rehearsed between the two). Both defendants were released on bond. Less than one month later, on May 10, 2003, TNT officers executed another search warrant at this same residence.



During this second search, officers found small amounts of suspected marijuana and cocaine, two ceramic plates with suspected cocaine residue on them, packaging material, a cell phone, and fifteen .38 special bullets with silver casings. The PSN task force reviewed Taylor's case and determined that his minimum federal exposure after a guilty plea on gun and drug charges could range from between 70 months' to 100 months' incarceration. At first, Taylor insisted that he wanted to "roll the dice" and refused all state plea offers despite the threat of federal prosecution. Taylor was informed that Grand Jury time was scheduled to hear his case. Two weeks before the Grand Jury date, Taylor changed his mind and pleaded guilty in state court and received a sentence of 12 years' incarceration, execution suspended after 8 years and 5 years probation.



***Jaleesa Kirton, Hartford***

***Age 13***

When I walk down the street all I see is people judging and dissin, fightin and killing.

All I hear is gunshots and cursing, people screaming and hurting.

Stop the selling of weapons to kids, stop the making of things that can break families apart,

Of things that can penetrate the heart, of things that can end a young child's life,

Of things that can make the ambulance come to a call when someone is shot and takes the long fall.

What I want to see is just like the American dream, what Rosa & Martin and Malcolm all dreamed.

No fear, no fighting, no guns, no violence.

All I see is family's being torn apart,

druggers and lovers soon depart.

Fathers with pistols hidden in the car.

If you love your sons and daughters,

Stop the making of things that slaughter.

*Ana T. Rosa, Bridgeport  
Age 17*

*"Pass the gat, I'm blastin' dis fool  
An all his peeps if dey wanna piece too.  
Kats think I'm playin' but I'm serious, B.  
I'mma teach 'emna disrespect me.  
Dis mah territory, I hol' dis spot down.  
Kats know dey get shot in dis part of town.  
He's a clown if he think I'm messin' 'round.  
Money wanna come an' make mah spot hot  
Knowin' I push da rocks on dis block.  
Son, I work hard for da cream  
To let some fool strip me of mah street dream...  
Take away mah weight, mah ends, mah pride, mah dividends  
Mah name, mah fame and everythin' else I gained...  
I murder da fool 'fore he put me ta shame  
It ain't a game an dis clown thinks it's funny.  
  
Trust me, gets ugly when you play wit mah money  
Matafact, dey he go, pass me da heat  
I'mma show dis Clown how it go down on dese streets."*

You've just been put on to a situation in desperate need of rectification. There's so much more to tragedies like these Yet this is the basis for most gun casualties--Ghetto minorities are force to work the streets Cuz they gotta find some way to eat. They can't work a regular nine to five. Job after job they're denied, not qualified to fill the high demanding positions in society's eyes. So the decision they make is to move some type, any type of weight. The more weight they accumulate, the more money they make, the more power they gain. The more, the more greed runs through their veins. And once their in top, the more they're envied. The more people try to knock what they've worked so hard to be. It's a street law of relativity. They feel the only way to defend what they own is strappin' themselves with the chrome. No need for words, cuz nobodies hearin' but once someone's down, everybody's chearin'. It's pressure, it's power; it's self- defense against a culture that grown to be moral-less.

Our children are being raised by the street, consumed by corruption, temptation and greed. Caused to live their lives without any ethics, mixed in a life that's all just too hectic. Pressured by their peers, closed in by their fears, stuck in a lie which to you seems unclear. But it's just the way things have turned to be. It's the movement of these slick city streets. Communication replaced by the heat if a gun while the media glorifies this corruption. Poor killing poor, we're wastin' away they way they hoped we all would some day. It's all part of their psychological plan. There's no power in guns, it's all in our hands. Let's try to help ourselves understand that we need to speak and break this silence so we can all put an end to homicidal gun violence.





**UNITED STATES v. ANGEL VARGAS**  
**(Hartford)**

In the spring of 2003, detectives in the Hartford Police Department, Vice/Narcotics Unit received information that an individual was committing armed robberies of various drug dealers in the south end of Hartford. After several unsuccessful attempts to locate that individual, a task force of Hartford Police officers and Connecticut State Police received confidential source information that led to the arrest of Angel Vargas. Vargas had an extensive criminal history including several convictions for armed robbery in Hartford. When apprehended on December 4, 2002, Vargas was in possession of a Smith & Wesson, .22 caliber revolver.

Because of his extensive criminal history, Vargas qualified for treatment as an Armed Career Criminal under federal law. Vargas' case was promptly adopted for federal prosecution. Owing to the excellent police work by the Hartford Police Department and Connecticut State Police, as well as the Project Safe Neighborhoods gun arrest protocol in place in Hartford, the case was well-prepared and hard-fought pre-trial motions were won by the Government. On May 7, 2003, Vargas pleaded guilty to the indictment, and on July 29, 2003, was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, to be followed by a five-year term of supervised release.

**UNITED STATES v. MANUEL ROSADO**  
**(Bridgeport)**

On December 20, 2002, members of the Bridgeport Police Department's Tactical Narcotics Team converged on the corner of Stratford and Fifth Avenues to arrest an individual they had just observed sell narcotics to a confidential informant. As they approached the corner, Lieutenant Chris Lamaine observed one individual push his way through the crowd and enter Pettway's Variety Store. Lamaine followed. When he entered the store, he observed the individual, later identified as MANUEL ROSADO, discard a small black pouch and a plastic baggie near a rear food rack in the store. Lt. Lamaine observed that the plastic bag contained what appeared to be several smaller baggies of narcotics and placed Rosado under arrest. During the search incident to arrest, Lt. Lamaine found a black magazine containing ten 9 millimeter rounds of ammunition in the pocket of the Rosado's jacket. Inside the black pouch, he found a Taurus 9 millimeter semiautomatic handgun; and inside the large ziplock baggie, he found nineteen smaller baggies of crack cocaine.

Rosado was given several chances to plead in state court to a ten year term of incarceration. He rejected those offers despite the threat of federal prosecution. Rosado was indicted and charged as an Armed Career Criminal. Rosado pleaded guilty and now faces twelve and a half years when he is sentenced in March 2004.



*Steven Woods, New Haven*

*Age 17*

Imagine, growing up in the streets  
Where all lives just perish, in my generation,  
guns and knives just scare us  
I'm on a mission, to help stop violence from  
persisting,  
So this world turns safe enough for us to  
raise kids in.  
I'm still surviving, buy with this violence,  
hate and bias,  
We as peace-makers have to form an  
alliance.  
The way I'm living, I see it all – hear it  
everyday,  
And I pray to God that people hear me in  
every way.  
I'm protestin' a message to adults and  
adolescents,  
To live life happy and peaceful without a  
weapon.  
One suggestion, conquer hate with love,  
Choose a book over a gun, and food over  
drugs.  
Smarten up, now-a-days a gun is not hard to  
touch,  
Since I lost a good friend I find it hurting too  
much.  
I did wrong but I'm wiser now, I'm speaking  
the truth,  
I held a mic when I felt so mad I need to  
shoot.  
That's what all of you should do, or make it  
something you like,  
Make it a hobby and probably make things  
alright.  
Live long until the day that you're supposed  
to be gone,  
Don't become entrapped in the streets guided  
by wrong.  
If this was court, I plead guilty when I speak  
of this case,  
With the charge of spreading peace and  
making this a better place.

**STATE v. ROBERT MARTIN**  
**(Bridgeport)**

On June 5, 2003, Bridgeport Police Officer Donald McCollum stopped Robert Martin believing he suspected that the car he was driving was stolen. Martin was the only person in the car. When asked, Martin was unable to produce proof of registration or insurance. Officer McCollum asked whether there was any contraband in the car, in response, Martin told the officer that he was a security guard and that there was a bulletproof vest in the trunk. A subsequent inventory search of the vehicle disclosed a black bag containing a bulletproof vest and a black, 9 millimeter Sportarms handgun in the trunk. The contraband was photographed in place and seized. In booking, Martin advised officer McCollum that he had "two bags of weed" on his person and that he had it for sale. He took the bags of marijuana from his pocket and placed them on the table. The PSN task force reviewed Martin's case and determined that his federal exposure on a plea was 46-57 months' incarceration. At first, Martin refused all plea offers and held out for a lower offer, despite the threat of federal prosecution. Grand jury time was scheduled and Martin was informed of the anticipated indictment date. Almost immediately thereafter, Martin pleaded guilty in state court to the original plea offer and received a sentence of 10 years' incarceration, execution suspended after 4 ½ years and 3 years probation.



Top 15 Winners from Hartford, New Haven  
and Bridgeport at Fox 61



*Shannon Gouse, Bridgeport  
Age 17*

What About Peace?

This earth is cursed with people that are not open minded who contains eyes that are blinded. This world is filled with abomination, aberration, and deviation. There is so much violence in our nation.

I must express my feelings. Clear my mind from killing, collapsing buildings, hatred and stealing.

I must express my thoughts and talk about the things that I witness when I walk in the streets.

I see death, lost souls, and hearts without beats.

Bodies being covered with white sheets with red spots where their blood seeps.

I watch souls leak with deceit. I witness the deaths of daughters and sons, while parents weep.

I scream for dreams and less nightmares. E & J, beer, screams and scares.

I no longer want to be sick from the rain.

I'm from where there is the use of slang, where grandparents bang.

I have to release my pain, release my brain from these shackles and chains. These flames.

In order to perpetuate we must end the hate before it is too late.

How much can a human take? I'm still upset from more than one decade when there were slaves hiding in caves.

People are filled with so much rage.

We need to stop separating and try to find a connection.

Deception is infecting the minds of children.

Why do so many deceive and mislead.

The world contains so much violence and death.

I can't imagine someone taking the air that I breath.

They live their lives trying to survive through war, guns, and knives. Drive-by's, where bullets fly.

There are so many people who are debonair.

There are kids living their lives through fear. Kids witnessing only blood and tears.

Some kids are taught to steal and kill before being taught to share. Does anyone care?

The world's sorcery is using me, confusing me, while I'm losing me.

All of this world's violence is ridiculous and malicious.

We must learn how to segregate, separate love from hate because the serpent has us confused, abused, and used.

We accuse our enemies when sometimes our enemies are our very selves.

Guns don't kill, people kill. It's also funny how they say crack kills, but people do drugs to escape from their problems and other people.

I must of added wrong because my calculations deciphered that humans were never treated equal.

But if we learn to treat each other equally, the war would not have a sequel.

Everyone wants to mistreat and defeat, but what about peace?



**STATE v. ZEBULON M. CUMMINGS**  
**(Waterbury)**

On November 2, 2003, Waterbury Police Officer Eduardo Rivera responded to 27 Water Street on a domestic disturbance call involving a firearm. Upon Arrival Officer Rivera spoke with Zebulon Cummings' wife who indicated that prior to police arrival her husband had threatened her with a silver handgun while the couples two minor children were present. Cummings was subsequently stopped a short time latter by Officer Nick Lukisky and found to have under the seat of his vehicle one silver Smith & Wesson .32 caliber revolver. Cummings was presented in Waterbury Superior Court on November 3, 2003 for arraignment and held in lieu of \$350,000 bond pending disposition of his case.

A criminal history check of Cummings revealed that prior to November 1, 2003 he had been convicted of several felony offenses, including felony convictions in Connecticut for Sale of Narcotics and Hindering Prosecution First Degree.

Cummings age 27, formerly of 40 Buford Avenue, Waterbury, Connecticut, pleaded guilty on January 13, 2004 to a three count substitute information charging him with Criminal Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, Weapon in a Motor Vehicle and Risk of Injury to a Minor. Pursuant to a plea agreement reached with the state Cummings received a sentence of ten years suspended after five years imprisonment followed by five years of probation.

This case was successfully prosecuted in conjunction with the Waterbury Domestic Violence Docket and the newly created Project Safe Neighborhood initiative.



**UNITED STATES v. PHILIP MEJIA**  
**(Hartford)**

During the spring and early summer of 2003, the DEA and the ATF were involved in a joint investigation of an alleged drug dealer and firearms trafficker in the Hartford/Springfield area names Philip Mejia. That joint investigation included several undercover purchases of narcotics, crack cocaine and ecstasy, as well as several firearms, including two .380 caliber, fully-loaded handguns and a Smith & Wesson .357 magnum revolver and ammunition. Notwithstanding Mejia's lack of criminal history, the excellent investigation by DEA and ATF, which included several recorded conversations and surveilled transactions, indicated that Mejia was a major supplier of narcotics and firearms to the Hartford area.

On December 8, 2003, Mejia was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, to be followed by five years federal supervised release. This investigation and prosecution serves as an excellent example of the coordinated effort among federal and local law enforcement agencies to make gun cases, particularly gun trafficking cases, a priority of the Hartford Project Safe Neighborhoods plan.

**UNITED STATES v. JOHN DELGADO**  
**(New Britain)**

John Delgado was prosecuted pursuant to the partnership between the United States Attorney's Office, New Britain Police Department, and the New Britain State's Attorney's Office. Delgado was sentenced on October 28, 2003, to a 15-year term of imprisonment as an Armed Career Criminal.

Delgado was arrested on March 21, 2003, after execution of a search warrant by the New Britain Police Department in an apartment in the Mount Pleasant Housing District, an area in New Britain well-known for narcotics dealing and gun violence. Execution of the search warrant netted an Intratec Model, .9 millimeter, semi-automatic pistol. Because of Delgado's extensive criminal history, including assault and weapons convictions, the case was adopted for federal prosecution. Delgado pleaded guilty on July 22, 2003 and was sentenced on October 28, 2003 to 15 years in federal prison. The fact of this prosecution and resulting sentence was widely publicized by the New Britain Police Department and has resulted in a decreased level of violence in the Mount Pleasant Housing Project.



***Jagged Edge Poetry/Rap Contest  
Winners***

**Hartford**

Nicolle Rolon, age 13  
Jaleesa Kirton, age 13  
Eduardo Mendoza, age 11  
Ashley Long, age 11  
John Crooms, age 16  
Jermaine Graham  
Norberto Dimener, age 10  
T'Shoni Bowery, age 15  
Leonel Sola, age 14  
Chabeli Gonzalez, age 11  
Zapharan T. Cashaw, age 11  
Kashema Little, age 13  
Nicole Witherspoon, age 14  
Hilda Garcia, age 14

**Bridgeport**

Tianah Shacklewood, age 13  
James Piazza, age 13  
Janissa Figueroa, age 11  
Shannon Gouse, age 17  
Ana T. Rosa, age 17  
Javier Wright, age 13  
Krystal Hall, age 10  
Jasmine McSwain, age 13  
Diamond Delva, age 12  
Samantha Miranda, age 11  
Ebony Martin, age 16  
Charmaine Hall, age 14

**New Haven**

Steven Woods, age 17  
Jocelyn Claxton, age 16  
Shalice Culbreath, age 14  
Domenique Maharaj, age 17  
Ilyssa Delgado, age 9  
Johniece Golett, age 14  
Ronan O. Munoz, age 14  
Judy James, age 14  
Jaakobha Harding, age 16  
Jasmyne Brown, age 13  
Jessica Quinonez, age 12  
Patricia Bellemey, age 14  
Michelle Beaupierre, age 12  
Jundiata Garuin, age 14  
Doninique Nevers, age 16

**STATE v. DEMARCO BROADNAX**  
**(Waterbury)**

On October 16, 2003, members of the Waterbury Police Department's Vice and Intelligence Unit executed a court ordered search and seizure warrant at 173 Easton Avenue, and for the person of Demarco Broadnax. The search warrant stemmed from a Waterbury Police investigation which disclosed that Broadnax utilized that location to distribute crack cocaine. The search of the apartment netted approximately 6.5 grams of crack cocaine as well as implements commonly associated with the packaging and preparation of crack cocaine for street sale. Also recovered between the mattress and box spring of Broadnax's bed was one Smith & Wesson model 34-1 revolver. Pursuant to the case protocol for Project Safe Neighborhoods in Waterbury, Broadnax was immediately interviewed by the task force supervisor Lt. Patrick Deely and admitted to possession of the gun and narcotics.

A criminal history check of Broadnax revealed that prior to November 13, 2003, he had been convicted of several felony offenses, including felony convictions in Connecticut for Robbery First Degree and Assault on a Peace Officer.

Demarco D. Broadnax, age 28, formerly of 26 James Street, Waterbury, Connecticut, pleaded guilty on November 13, 2003, to a two count information charging him with Criminal Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon and Possession of Narcotics with Intent to Sell. Pursuant to a plea agreement reached with the state Broadnax was to receive a sentence of fifteen years suspended after eight years imprisonment followed by five years probation.

On December 5, 2003, Broadnax failed to appear for his sentencing date and was ordered rearrested. He was subsequently apprehended by task force detectives on December 23, 2003 and is currently held in lieu of \$500,000 bond awaiting sentencing. Based upon his non-appearance on his original sentencing date BROADNAX has violated the terms and conditions of his plea agreement and the court is free to sentence him to a maximum of twenty years imprisonment. Broadnax will be sentenced on February 5, 2004.

Broadnax's case was reviewed and prosecuted under the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative within 28 days of his arrest.



**STATE v. JOSEPH DiFUSCO**  
**(New Haven)**

In early September, 2003, Joseph DiFusco, a 35-year old former Marine, took up residence in a dormitory at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, where he was enrolled in an undergraduate program of study. DiFusco's roommate noticed that DiFusco had guns in his room. The roommate told his father, who swiftly notified the SCSU police. Upon further investigation, police found several firearms, ammunition, and gun parts in DiFusco's dormitory room and on his person, along with other deadly weapons and instructions on how to build a silencer. DiFusco was found to be in possession of two machine guns, a flare gun that had been modified to shoot either a shotgun shell or a .22 caliber bullet. DiFusco, a convicted felon, was arrested and charged in Superior Court with various weapons violations.

The United States Attorney's Office and ATF prepared to present the case to a grand jury for indictment on both Title 18 and Title 26 offenses. On December 11, 2003, DiFusco appeared in Superior Court and was advised of the impending federal prosecution. He promptly pled guilty and was sentenced to a 4-year term of imprisonment.



**STATE v. CRAIG BROWN**  
**(New Haven)**



On March 20, 2003, officers of the New Haven Police Department arrested Craig Brown, 20 years old, for his unlawful possession of a .22 caliber handgun. At the time of this arrest, Brown, a convicted felon, was on state probation, having previously served 18 months following his conviction in Superior Court for a drug sale offense.

Pursuant to the protocol established between the United States Attorney's Office and the New Haven State's Attorney's Office, Brown's matter was referred to both offices for prosecutorial review. In June 2003, state and federal prosecutors decided that a plea offer should be extended to Brown allowing him to plead guilty in Superior Court, with the understanding that he would not subsequently be prosecuted in federal court. After several continuances and delays, Brown rejected the proposed plea bargain. Accordingly, the United States Attorney's Office prepared to present the matter to a grand jury.

At his next appearance in Superior Court on July 10, 2003, the Assistant State's Attorney advised Brown and the judge in open court that Brown's case should be continued in light of the impending federal prosecution. Brown's girlfriend, who was in attendance, advised Brown from the gallery to "Take the deal!" Following the advice of his girlfriend, and in order to avoid the prospect of federal prosecution, Brown accepted a plea deal that was considerably less favorable than that which was originally offered to him by the State's Attorney's Office. He was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 10 years, execution suspended after six years, followed by a three-year term of probation.

**STATE v. MALIK WADE**  
**(Waterbury)**

On July 10, 2003, Waterbury Police Officer David McKnight observed Wade in the area of Meadow Street. Wade matched the description of a murder suspect and was briefly detained for questioning. It was determined that while Wade had no connection to the murder, he did have an active arrest warrant for failure to appear in Waterbury Superior Court. Wade was arrested. A search incident to arrest revealed that WADE possessed a loaded Highpoint 9 millimeter handgun concealed in the back-pack he was carrying.

A criminal history check on Wade disclosed that prior to July 10, 2003, he had been convicted of several felony offenses, including felony convictions in New York for Robbery First Degree and Criminal Possession of a Weapon First Degree.

Malik Wade, age 32 formerly of 41 Ward Street, Waterbury Connecticut, pleaded guilty on August 7, 2003, to a one count substitute information charging him with Criminal Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. Pursuant to the plea agreement reached with the state, Wade received a sentence of five years suspended after thirty months imprisonment followed by five years probation.

Wade's case is notable because it is among the first to be prosecuted under Waterbury's newly formed partnership with PSN. This case is also notable because, owing to the threat of federal prosecution, the disposition came only 27 days after arrest.

**STATE v. BRYAN MALONE**  
**(Waterbury)**

On September 17, 2003, Officer Todd Lovejoy of the Waterbury Police Department along with members of the Gang Task Force received information from a known reliable confidential informant that Bryan Malone was in possession of a 9 millimeter Intratec Tech 9 sub machine gun. Officers applied for and were granted a search and seizure warrant for the person of Malone and his apartment. On the way to the residence Officers observed Malone standing on the side of the road adjacent to his apartment. Malone was found to have in his possession the Tech 9 with obliterated serial numbers.

Pursuant to the case protocol for Project Safe Neighborhoods in Waterbury, Malone was immediately interviewed by Task Force Detectives and admitted to possessing the gun for his personal protection. At the time of his arrest Malone had no prior criminal history. The Waterbury Police Firearms Examiner subsequently found the weapon to be inoperable.

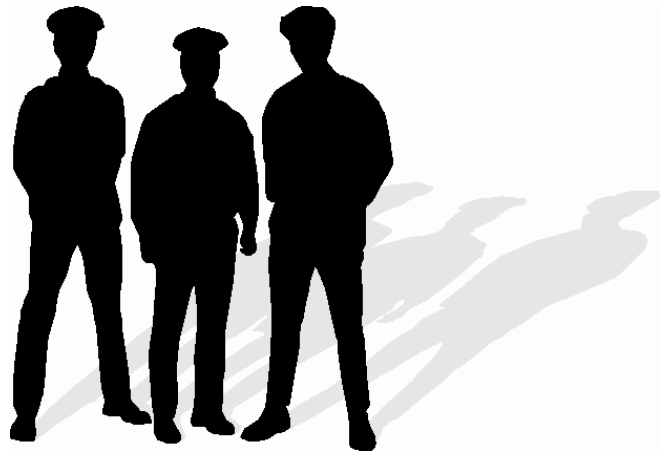
On October 24, 2003, Malone pleaded guilty to a two count substitute information charging him with Carrying a Dangerous Weapon and Altering the Identification Marks on a Firearm. The sentencing hearing was scheduled for January 16, 2004.

On October 28, 2003 Andy's Oil Service on Walnut Street in Waterbury was robbed at gunpoint by a seventeen year-old black male. The gas station attendant told investigating officers that he struggled with the young man and was able to wrestle control of the loaded 9 millimeter Taurus handgun the youth was carrying. The attendant was also able to make a positive identification of the youth which led to the arrest of Kenneth Martin for the charge of Robbery First Degree.

Kenneth Martin then related to the police in a sworn written statement that he had purchased the gun from Bryan Malone for two hundred dollars in cash and two hundred dollars worth of crack cocaine. Malone was subsequently arrested by warrant for this offense

Malone pleaded guilty on January 16, 2004 to an additional two-count substitute information charging him with Carrying a Pistol Without a Permit and Illegal Sale of a Pistol to a Minor. Malone received a total effective sentence of fifteen years suspended after seven years imprisonment followed by five years probation.

Notwithstanding Malone's lack of any prior criminal history, the outstanding investigative efforts of Detective Sgt. Scott Stevenson and Detective Mark Ryan of the Waterbury Police Department disclosed that Malone was a significant supplier of illegal firearms in the Waterbury area.





## CONNECTICUT'S PROJECT SENTRY INITIATIVE

Project Sentry has created a nationally recognized plan to reduce juvenile. A major part of the plan involves teaching students about the consequences of criminal behavior from a prosecutor's and ex-offender's perspective. Last year, we presented this entertaining, yet extremely informative, presentation to the entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade student population in New Haven. This year, we are continuing this course of action and have expanded the program to other cities in Connecticut. In this regard, we are in the progress of presenting our power point presentation to the entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade populations in Bridgeport and New Haven. The presentation has been so well received that many schools invite us back to speak to other grades as well.

Project Sentry is also actively involved in the community. In February, we partnered with numerous community organizations in Hartford to sponsor a talent show. The talent show, like other events, will serve as a draw to get the targeted population out to hear our message regarding violence and drugs. Project Sentry is also a part of many community-based organizations, including Communities that Care Hartford and the Albany/Vine Street Task Force, Hartford, CT.

Keith King  
Project Sentry

### STATE V. ANTWAN BOZEMAN AND BERNARD GONZALEZ (Hartford)

On October 24, 2003, police approached the rear of 234 Mather Street, on a report of drug sales occurring around a white Maxima. Two males were standing on both sides of the Maxima's open front doors. Both males ran when police shined a spotlight on them and both were observed reaching into their waistbands during the subsequent pursuit. An individual subsequently identified as Bernard Gonzalez dropped a .380 High Point pistol and threw down eleven (11) bags of crack cocaine during the pursuit. Antwan Bozeman was caught and several bags of crack cocaine fell from his right hand to the ground. Bozeman was also in possession of a 9mm Smith & Wesson pistol and \$1,775 in U.S. currency.

Against the threat of federal prosecution charging both illegal gun possession and drug trafficking and a possible mandatory minimum federal sentence, Gonzalez entered pleas in state court on December 2, 2003 and was sentenced to 8 years to serve in prison. Bozeman entered pleas on December 10, 2003 and will be sentenced to 7 years in prison on February 13, 2004.



## PROSECUTION OF FIREARMS TRAFFICKING OFFENSES IN FEDERAL COURT

**James I. Glasser**  
**Chief, Criminal Division**

Unlawful dealing in firearms is a pernicious offense that often results in lethal weapons being placed in the hands of drug traffickers and violent felons. Statistics demonstrate that it is this class of individuals who are responsible for a disproportionate percent of the crime in our urban centers. Recent investigation and prosecutions demonstrates that frequently drug users with no criminal record are lawfully purchasing multiple firearms and illegally selling them for money to buy drugs or directly in exchange for drugs. Not that long ago, the United States Attorney's Office prosecuted a young man in Bridgeport, Elwood Schular, Jr., who purchased 177 firearms over an 11 month period—all from the same gun shop, D'Andrea's Gun Case. When authorities were notified of the multiple purchases and Schular was contacted he could account for none of the 177 guns he purchased. For months thereafter, guns purchased by Schular turned up in connection with drug arrests and the execution of drug related search and seizure warrants. Schular was arrested and prosecuted for illegal dealing in firearms. *See United States v. Schular*, 907 F.2d 294 (2d Cir. 1990) *see also United States v. Austin*, 17 F.3d 27 (2d Cir. 1994) (Austin purchased 31 guns over a 14 month period, all from the same Hamden gun shop, and sold them illegally). Other more recent examples of similar prosecutions are found in this Bulletin. *See, e.g., Summary of USA v. Norman Youngblood*. Obviously, it is precisely this type of conduct that the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative is ideally suited to address.

This article will discuss federal prosecution of illegal dealing in firearms cases. In 1986 Congress passed a series of laws pertaining to the possession and transfer of firearms recognizing that the ease with which persons, including criminals, were able to acquire firearms was a significant factor in the prevalence of violent crime in the United States. One of these laws can be found at Title 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(1)(A). In summary, that statute provides: "It shall be unlawful for any person . . . except a licensed dealer, to engage in the business of . . . dealing in firearms. . . ." *Id.*

In order to sustain a prosecution under this statute, the Government must be in a position to establish the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt: 1) That on or about the dates alleged in the charging document, the defendant **engaged in the business** of dealing in firearms; 2) That defendant did not have a license to deal or sell firearms; 3) That the defendant acted willfully.

The Second Circuit Court of Appeals has interpreted the operative phrase, "engaged in the business" to require that the putative defendant devote time, attention, and labor to dealing in firearms as a regular course of trade or business with the principal objective of livelihood and profit through the repetitive purchase and resale of firearms. *See United States v. Carter*, 801 F.2d 78, 81 (2d Cir. 1986); *see also* Title 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(21)(C). Courts have held that proof of profit is not required as to a person who engages in the regular and repetitive purchase and disposition of firearms for criminal purposes. To satisfy the final element, the Government must be able to prove that the defendant acted "willfully." To satisfy this element, the Government must establish that the defendant acted intentionally and purposely and with the intent to do something the law forbids. The Government does **not** have to establish that the defendant was aware of this specific law and acted with the intent to violate it; only that the defendant acted with the intent to do something the law forbids. *See Bryan v. United States*, 534 U.S. 184 (1998); *United States v. Whab* 2004 WL 77887 (2d Cir. Jan. 20, 2004).

In addition to the foregoing statute, there are other arrows in the quiver of federal firearms laws to address the illegal transfer of firearms. For example, 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(3) provides that it is a crime for an unlawful user of controlled substances to possess or receive a firearm or ammunition that traveled in interstate or foreign commerce. Similarly, 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(5)(A) provides that it is a crime for an illegal alien to possess or receive a firearm that traveled in interstate commerce. The Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative can use these statutes, and others, along with innovative programs such as the review of multiple purchase forms, aggressive review of federal forms 4473 and aggressive canvassing of known firearms retail outlets, in an effort to identify and prosecute illegal firearms traffickers before the guns they are selling end up as crime guns.



## **Project Safe Neighborhoods Receives \$3,000.00 donation from Pennies for Peace Campaign**

As part of the Project Safe Neighborhood initiative, United States Attorney Kevin J. O'Connor in conjunction with HOT 93.7 and The Justice Education Center announced Wilby High School in Waterbury as the winner of "Pennies for Peace" campaign. After a two-week collection, Wilby High School collected 523,000 pennies. The total collected from all participating schools was \$9,179.00. The donations collected by the students will benefit The Justice Education Center for the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, as well as the Urban League of Greater Hartford and the Hartford Mayor's Office Task Force.

"PSN is not just about putting people in jail. We have enlisted the assistance of community groups and others in each city who can provide the support services released offenders may need to successfully re-enter the community, as well as a comprehensive juvenile gun crime reduction program in each school system, known as Project Sentry." The District of Connecticut's Project Sentry program enables the U.S. Attorney's Office to expand its primary and traditional prosecutorial role in the community by reaching out to juveniles in an effort to deter juvenile gun crime and promote school safety. In this regard, the Project Sentry seeks to spread the message to at-risk youth that there are serious consequences associated with being involved with firearms; increase the investigation and prosecution of adults who furnish juveniles with firearms juveniles who possess firearms; and improve school safety.

Project Sentry also has enhanced, established and expanded partnerships with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, federal, state and municipal governments, community groups and the faith community.

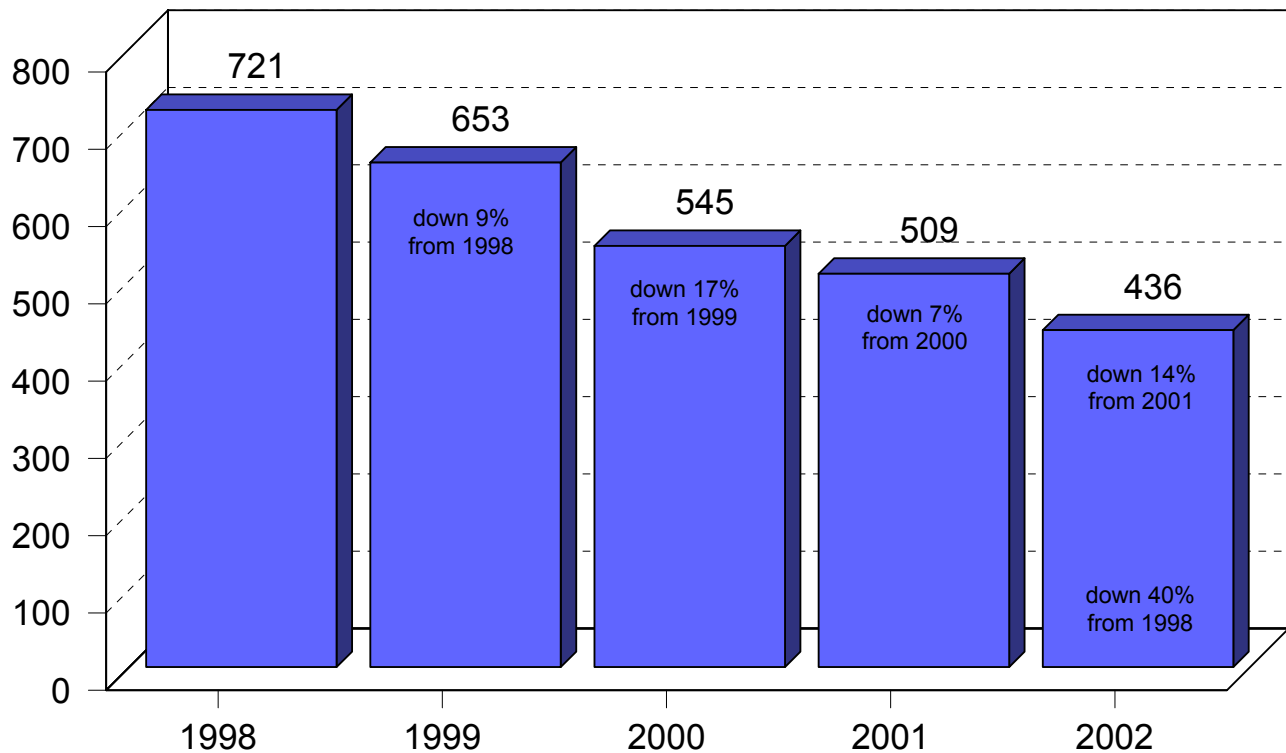


Because they collected the most pennies, Wilby High School received an in-school concert by Rap Artist, "Bow Wow". "Project Safe Neighborhoods is not only about 'Hard Time for Gun Crime' it is also an initiative to help children focus on the consequences of gun violence and try to get them to think critically about the decisions that they are making." O'Connor said.



## PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS, COUPLED WITH OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS, IS PRODUCING DRAMATIC RESULTS

Number of Violent Gun Crimes\* in Bridgeport\*\*



\* Includes murder with firearm, assault with firearm and robbery with firearm.

\*\* The data for 1998-2001 are from the annual "Crime in Connecticut" reports published by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Safety. The 2002 Crime in Connecticut report was not published at the time this report was written. Therefore, the number of assaults with a firearm and robberies with a firearm in 2002 was determined using the monthly reports submitted by the Bridgeport Police Department to the Department of Public Safety to be used for the 2002 Crime in Connecticut report. The number of murders with a firearm was obtained from the Detective Bureau of the Bridgeport Police Department.

- *The number of violent crimes in Bridgeport has decreased each year from 1998 to 2002.*
- *In 2002, there were 436 violent gun crimes committed in Bridgeport, this is a 14% decrease from 2001 (down from 509 violent gun crimes), and a 40% decrease from 1998 (down from 721 violent gun crimes)*

This information was extracted from Spectrum Associates *12/1/03 Assessment of Violent Gun crimes in the City of Bridgeport*, prepared by Dorinda M. Richetelli and Eliot C. Hartstone, PhD



# CONNECTICUT POST

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52¢ in retail outlets

## Feds cracking down on gun crime

Bring threat of more time for weapons use

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRIDGEPORT — It's another Thursday, and the prosecutors, detectives and federal agents around the Bridgeport Police Department conference table have a new list of names to discuss.

Somebody on the list is about to have a very bad Friday.

Somebody will learn that his gun case has caught the eye of the federal

government. He will get one chance to plead guilty to those charges in state court before a government prosecutor scoops up the file and turns the discussion to mandatory federal prison sentences.

These meetings occur in every state as the federal government takes on a greater share of gun prosecutions. Indictments for federal gun crimes increased more than 20 percent last year, the largest single-year increase on record, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Criminologists say the \$900 million program, called Project Safe Neighborhoods, is the most aggressive

federal crackdown on gun crime ever undertaken. Before being overshadowed by terrorism, it was to be the cornerstone of President Bush's public safety agenda.

Federal indictments and convictions hit all-time highs last year, but it is too early to tell whether that has meant safer streets, officials at the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics said.

Cities around the country, however, are touting early success stories — including a 50 percent reduction in shootings in Bridgeport so far this year.

► Please see **THREAT** on A11



**Sizing up cases:** Law enforcement officials hold their regular weekly meeting in Bridgeport Thursday to determine who will be subject to federal prosecution in gun cases. Present were, from left, Assistant Bridgeport State's Attorney Craig Nowack, Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Spector, Bridgeport Detective Dwayne K. McBride and Bridgeport Police Capt. Lynn Kerwin.

## Threat of fed prosecution seen as deterrent

Continued from A1

Similar programs are under way in New Haven and Hartford and are in their infancy in Stamford and Waterbury.

"They're not giving me much of an option to do anything," defendant Damon Belk, 31, told a Connecticut judge in July as he took a 15-year plea deal, suspended after eight years. "The Federal Bureau is waiting in the corner for me to say I'm not going to take this plea, so they could take over the case."

The threat starts working soon after an arrest.

Craig Nowack, assistant Bridgeport state's attorney, said suspects never used to give statements in lockup. Now, more give statements than do not. City detectives trained to build federal cases are asking the right questions, and the threat of federal court hangs over every discussion.

In August, prosecutors threatened 26-year-old Bridgeport drug dealer Ralph Young with a federal indictment and a

possible 15-year minimum sentence. Within days, he accepted a 10-year state sentence.

Most gun crimes are state matters, but federal law prohibits eight groups from carrying guns: felons, fugitives, drug users, illegal aliens, mental patients, people who have given up citizenship, anyone with a dishonorable military discharge and those involved in domestic violence.

That gives Project Safe Neighborhoods a lot of flexibility. States are using money to fight gangs, stop illegal gun buys and combat spousal abuse.

Prosecutors in Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford review every gun arrest. They decide at weekly meetings which cases have the best federal hooks. Defense attorneys are notified and must warn their clients that state court is now the least of their problems.

"They find it hard to believe," defense attorney Frank O'Reilly said. "They're so used to the state system."

That is why police are spreading the word. Connecticut

officials host mandatory meetings for parolees and probationers. They explain the program and spell out the consequences, and offer job counseling to steer people away from the streets.

"We're getting the message out there: Don't even think about picking up that gun," said Connecticut U.S. Attorney Kevin O'Connor.

"Because mere possession will send you to federal prison for a mandatory minimum sentence."

That is 10 years for a felon in possession of a firearm, 15 years to life for an armed career criminal.

"We say, 'I don't know what the old system was. This is the system now,'" said Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Spector, who handles federal gun prosecution in Bridgeport.

The laws have been on the books for years, though until recently enforcement had been left largely to the states. Then a 1990s program in Richmond, Va., suggested federal prosecution could dramatically lower

violent crime rates.

Because of historical turf battles among local, state and federal agencies, some cities accept that idea more readily than others.

"Some guys had a first reaction, because they're old school, of 'What are we doing that for?'" Waterbury Police Chief Neil O'Leary said. "We're doing it because if they can get eight to 10 years in federal prison, it gives us a lot more leverage."

While officials champion the program's success in Bridgeport and New Haven, Hartford's experience suggests Project Safe Neighborhood is no magic cure.

The capital city's police department is understaffed, the chief and the mayor are feuding, and federal penalties have not prevented a recent spate of gun violence. "I don't know why we haven't been as effective in Hartford as we have in other cities," O'Connor said. "Hartford may be, relatively speaking, a tougher challenge. But what would the situation in Hartford be without this program?"



# Spreading a Message About Gun Crime

By STACEY STOWE

**T**HE three teenagers who took to a stage behind the Old State House in Hartford bravely performed a history of their own, telling of gun violence that kills their friends and plagues their schools and neighborhoods. Their refrain to passersby and a crowd of the highest-ranking law enforcement officials in the state, was "What are you going to do?"

It was not a question tossed off in resignation, but a plea illustrating how gun violence demands attention beyond the places where children tote guns or where bullets spray from passing cars.

The skit was one of a series of public service messages developed by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The messages include performances of rap musicians and bus advertisements aimed at promoting safe neighborhoods through a reduction in gun crimes. Other high visibility efforts include the installation of 211, a telephone number for information on gun-safety resources. All are attempts to reduce gun crimes in urban neighborhoods.

For the past five years, Connecticut law enforcement officials have stepped up efforts to reduce gun violence. The state joined national efforts. Police officers in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven were trained; Stamford joined the program in June. Prosecutors at the state and federal level worked toward stiffer sentences for gun crimes. With the bus advertisements, the skit and 211, the message has gone public.

"The murder rates in Bridgeport and New Haven have declined dramatically since the campaign began," said Kevin J. O'Connor, Connecticut's United States attorney, and one of 93 United States attorneys who are leading the project nationwide. "There's no way to say definitively that X causes Y, but we've also dramatically increased the prosecution of gun crimes."

While Bridgeport and New Haven have seen a decrease in homicides since the program began, Hartford's rate has remained relatively steady. The city has, however, seen an increase of 50 percent since last year in shootings. Bruce P. Marquis, the Hartford police chief, said most are drug-related shooting, but blames the spike in large part on budget cuts yielding too few officers. Some 80 are retiring in December with just 46 replacements expected from the police academy.

"You've got to have visibility out there," Chief Marquis said. "One of the tenets of law enforcement is if you want to deter crime, you have to be a visible presence on the streets."

As for more vigorous prosecution of gun crimes, the program paid for the hiring of three more full-time federal prosecutors and one legal as-



Thomas McDonald for The New York Times

Craig Nowak, left, an assistant state's attorney, and Francis L. O'Reilly, a Fairfield lawyer, are working to stop gun violence in the state.

## A short step from the neighborhood to federal prison.

Assistant. The Bush administration committed almost a half-billion dollars for 2001 to 2003 for the program, prompted by statistics in 1999 that revealed two-thirds of the 12,658 murders nationwide were shooting deaths.

Connecticut began an earnest examination of gun violence five years ago. A collaborative effort, formally known as Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiatives or Sacci, was established between the United States Attorney's office, the New Haven Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and state prosecutors.

In 2001, another program, Project Safe Neighborhoods, was launched in three state cities, in tandem with programs in states throughout the nation. Both established regular meetings of local, state and federal agencies to share information on gun crimes and expedite investigations and prosecutions. The effort led to a 30 percent increase in the prosecution of gun crimes statewide.

The law enforcement agencies work with community groups and leaders for tips about potential gun violence. More than 6,000 state children, ages 11 to 21, have been ad-

ressed by two prosecutors from the United States Attorney's office through a program called Project Sentry. Keith A. King and Lori Lamarre, assistant United States attorneys, speak in schools to deter juvenile gun crimes and promote non-violent means of settling disputes. The project also increases efforts to investigate children who possess guns and the prosecution of adults who furnish guns to children.

The project promotes a catchy slogan, "Hard Time for Gun Crime," in its pamphlets and public announcements. Since the program takes a comprehensive approach to reducing gun violence, efforts to reduce recidivism were established; offenders released from prison attend meetings to hear about the consequences of future criminal activity, and the benefits of drug and alcohol programs and job counseling. "I took advantage of cracks in the system," said Pedro Delgado, addressing the police chiefs, state and federal prosecutors and federal agents at the Old State House, as well as news media contingent that included a taping of the program by Hartford Public Schools. "Now there are no more cracks in the system. If you possess an illegal handgun, you're going to jail."

Before the project, the threat of federal court was less significant, said Craig Nowak, an assistant state's attorney in Bridgeport. It was a lengthy and laborious to move prosecution of a gun crime from the state to the federal level. Now, a gun crimes case sits on the docket six

months or less. A federal prosecution means bail is non-existent, the sentence is longer than in a state facility and served out-of-state for men since Connecticut doesn't have a federal prison for men. A federal sentence is also served without parole.

Mr. Nowak, who works with Robert Spector, an assistant United States attorney, on the safe neighborhoods program, said he has seen a "significant number" of state gun cases resolved within a month or two of arraignment with lengthy prison time. With the threat of federal prison, defendants are pleading out more readily, he said.

"Our goal is to keep prohibitive people, felons, from carrying firearms and also prosecuting illegal use of firearms," Mr. Nowak said. Francis L. O'Reilly, a Fairfield lawyer, said he has had several clients enter pleas in state court in order to avoid federal prosecution. Most, he said, are shocked they could face federal charges at all.

"Part of the problem is not all defense attorneys are aware of the exposure in federal court," said Mr. O'Reilly. "The clients aren't aware at all and don't believe it can happen to them."

Although the right to bear arms continues to flourish, there are myriad exemptions according to Project Safe Neighborhoods: convicted felons, fugitives from justice, drug users or addicts, illegal aliens and "mental defectives or persons committed at any time to mental institutions." Anyone who has formally renounced United States citizenship, has been dishonorably discharged from the armed services, or has committed domestic violence, also cannot legally possess a gun.

Defendants who possess a firearm or ammunition and are convicted of a felony, could be sentenced to a maximum of 10 years in jail but the average sentence is six to eight years. Three or more prior violent felony or serious drug offenses means a minimum of 15 years in prison without parole.

Firearm indictments rose with the advent of the program. Firearms prosecutions rose 100 percent from 1999 to 2002 and 32 percent from 2001 to 2002 in federal court, according to literature on Project Safe Neighborhoods.

Nationally, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms has dedicated 400 special agents to Project Safe Neighborhoods and trained more than 1,400 police officers in association with several state and national law enforcement programs, according to information released by the bureau this year.

Educating local police on the search and seizure aspect of the Fourth Amendment, Fifth Amendment rights and Miranda requirements is another component of Project Safe Neighborhoods.

In Bridgeport, the collaboration between local, state and federal law enforcement led to the federal prosecution of drug trafficking gangs like the Latin Kings, Green Top Posse and Estrada Organization, Mr. O'Connor said, netting 145 defendants who were sentenced to prison.

"Over all, homicides with guns are down," said Bridgeport Police Captain Lynn Kerwin, who explained the city saw a 50 percent reduction in homicides from June 2002 to June 2003. "Everyone is on their toes."

### Correction

An article last Sunday about the passage of a bill to protect the tax-exempt status of some charities misidentified the party of a co-sponsor, State Senator John McKinney. He is a Republican.



## Federal plan offers Bridgeport benefits

When law enforcement agencies work cooperatively, good things can happen.

Supporting that maxim is the example of an operation called Project Safe Neighborhood, a program that brings the attentions of local, state and federal authorities to bear on felons who are caught with guns.

The program, operating in Bridgeport and other state cities, is backed by statutes that can cost a felon a 10-year federal prison term if caught with a gun or ammunition.

So once a month, at the Bridgeport Salvation Army, the state and federal prosecutors meet with recently released felons to explain to them what could happen if they are caught with a gun or ammunition.

Statistics presented by Bridgeport police officials are impressive indeed:

- The number of assaults with firearms has dropped from 107 in 2000 to 48 so far this year.
- Homicides involving firearms are down from 17 to eight during that same period.
- The number of shots fired also has dropped from 592 in 2000 to 303 so far this year.

Asst. U.S. Attorney James Glasser, the chief of the U.S. Attorney's office's criminal prosecution division, rightly pointed out the other day that when crime drops in a city like Bridgeport there can be a potentially huge benefit.

Not only are the residents safer, but people from the suburbs are more comfortable coming in to attractions like, say, the Arena at Harbor Yard.

That influx, in turn, leads to restaurants and an overall more vital business climate. Jobs and a stronger tax base are inevitable.

Project Safe Neighborhood, funded with more than \$1 billion in federal money, is not merely punitive.

The program also offers job training, attitude adjustment seminars and an adult education program to recently released felons.

Project Safe Neighborhood is proof that a program supported by federal funds can be extremely successful when it is run by capable people committed to making our cities safer for everyone.



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# The ADVOCATE

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## Editorial

DB

# Stay strong against gun crimes

The belief that gun laws can be effective as long as they are enforceable and enforced has been strengthened in Connecticut through cooperative efforts that have given a bigger role to federal authorities. Federal indictments and convictions for crimes with firearms reached an all-time high last year under a national program operating in our state, and indications are that the number of shootings in Connecticut and elsewhere has been reduced as a result.

At the heart of initiative is an arrangement whereby state, local and federal law enforcement authorities jointly determine which gun crimes would best be prosecuted under national laws. Past policy previously left prosecution to state jurisdictions. But The Associated Press has reported that federal officials now are stepping in with the use of laws that make it federal crime for eight categories of individuals to possess guns: felons, fugitives, drug users, illegal aliens, mental patients, those who have given up citizenship, former service personnel with dishonorable discharges and those involved in domestic violence.

It no doubt has helped to have more enforcement resources for such crimes. But an even more beneficial effect seems to come from the penalties that accompany federal prosecution: It is reported that felons are agreeing to accept significant sen-

### The Issue:

*State and federal laws are effective if they are rigorously enforced.*

tences in state court when the alternative is federal prosecution with stiff mandatory prison terms. For example, one drug dealer reportedly accepted a 10-year state sentence after being threatened with federal indictment and a possible 15-year-minimum term.

In Bridgeport, where there has been a 50 percent decrease in shootings so far this year, Assistant State's Attorney Craig Nowack explained that federal prosecution is enabled in part because city detectives have been trained to help build federal cases when questioning suspects.

Beyond the fact this makes the process from arrest to incarceration move along more quickly, there also is a deterrent effect: Parolees and those on probation in Connecticut must attend meetings where state authorities tell them what they could face under the new enforcement initiative. Job counseling also is provided.

The effort is believed to be having good effect in New Haven as well as in Bridgeport. There has been a spate

of gun violence in Hartford, where the initiative also has been instituted, but authorities suggest the problem would be even worse without the program. Stamford and Waterbury recently have begun participation.

There undoubtedly will be some wrinkles. One involves inter-agency jealousies that are traditional and need to be overcome if this arrangement is to work effectively. And at least one lawyer has raised questions about constitutionality regarding the federal role.

But effectiveness of the cooperative effort was established in the 1990s through a similar operation in Richmond, Va., and we hope it can be continued. President Bush, not usually regarded as a gun-law advocate, deserves credit for implementing the enforcement action nationally through a \$900 million program called Project Safe Neighborhoods.

It is unfortunate that the debate over firearms laws often seems to occur between extremes: groups and individuals who regard them as unnecessary and ineffective, and others who believe more laws are the only answer to gun violence. The recent enforcement initiative suggests a desirable middle-ground approach: Gun crime can be reduced if sound laws are drafted in a way they can be enforced, and then sufficient enforcement resources are put behind them.



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